DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 058 630 EA 003 935

AUTHOR Gass, J. R.
TITLE Planning the Educational Revolution. The Fundamentals of Educational Planning: Lecture-Discussion Series No. 43.
INSTITUTION United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Paris (France). International Inst. for Educational Planning.
REPORT NO IIEP-TM-43-69
PUB DATE 69
NOTE 7p.
AVAILABLE FROM IIEP, 7 rue Eugene Delacroix, Paris XVI (France) ($.25 Distr. Charge)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Decision Making; *Educational Change; *Educational Innovation; Educational Philosophy; *Educational Planning; *Educational Policy; Innovation; *Instructional Materials; Planning; Programed Texts; Social Change
IDENTIFIERS Educational Reform

ABSTRACT

In a controlled experiment, the IIEP attempted to develop efficient teaching materials in the field of educational planning. Informal instructional materials were compiled from the tape recordings, transcriptions, and summary notes of seminars, lectures, and discussions conducted by the IIEP in its training and research program. This instructional unit discusses the necessity of planning educational innovations and creating social conditions conducive to change instead of permitting changes to occur haphazardly. Related documents are EA 003 931-934 and EA 003 936-942. (RA)

ED 072070

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

The Fundamentals of Educational Planning : Lecture - Discussion Series

No. 43 PLANNING THE EDUCATIONAL REVOLUTION

by J.R. Gass

EA 003 935

Unesco : International Institute for Educational Planning

IIEP/TM/43/69

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING
9, rue Eugène Delacroix
Paris 16e, France

PLANNING THE EDUCATIONAL REVOLUTION

by

J.R. Gass
Director, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, OECD

This lecture is part of 'Fundamentals of Educational Planning; Lecture-Discussion Series' a controlled experiment undertaken by the International Institute for Educational Planning in collaboration with a limited number of organizations and individuals aiming at the development of efficient teaching materials in the field of educational planning. By their very nature these materials, which draw upon tape recordings, transcriptions and summary notes of seminars, lectures and discussions conducted by IIEP as part of its training and research programme, are informal and not subject to the type of editing customary for published documents. They are therefore not to be considered as 'official publications'.

The opinions expressed in this lecture are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the Institute.

The use, adaptation or reproduction, in whole or in part of these materials is limited to institutions and persons specifically authorized by IIEP.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL BY MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

UNESCO- IIEP

TO ERIC AND ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING UNDER AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. OFFICE OF EDUCATION. FURTHER REPRODUCTION OUTSIDE THE ERIC SYSTEM REQUIRES PERMISSION OF THE COPYRIGHT OWNER."

This title for my talk is an exceedingly arrogant title. The first obvious thing is that revolutions are not very often planned. The plans usually come after the revolution and I don't know whether this would also be the case for education. At least, we can accept that whatever view we take of education - its role in society and in the economy - all countries are going through a process whereby its relationship to social development, cultural development and even the economy is very rapidly changing. I am sure that during this course you will explore many of the parameters of that relationship.

Since we have the word 'revolution', we have to start off with fundamentals and to recognise that there is a view of the purposes of education which is exceedingly radical, and which means that it makes relatively little sense to try to plan it and its relationship to society. This is the view that some students are taking today. Education is viewed as the one sector of society which enables the individuals to strive for equity. It also enables individuals to feel free of the constraints which all other social institutions put upon them.

Thus, we should be cautious when we talk of <u>planning</u> the educational revolution.

However, even the most radical of us have to recognise that educational change is now proceeding at a rapidly increasing rate, and that in some sense it can be planned because the direction of change is the result of policy decisions.

You can take two different views of the process of change. One is to say that educational change is something that should be achieved by individuals in a creative way in the process of teaching. In other words, the planner should create the environment and the structures in which the teachers, class, school can freely innovate. This would be the approach in quite a number of countries today and certainly by the pedagogues in most countries.

On the other hand, you can contrast that with what may appear to be a contradictory viewpoint, namely: that educational change must be related to accepted objectives of society and must be organised in the sense that it is directed towards certain ends which are planned.

Let me explore these two attitudes and try to reconcile them. Whatever viewpoint we may take philosophically at the 'grass roots' level in terms of human values in favour of creative change by individuals, we cannot escape the fact that the educational system is a <u>system</u> and that there is a coherence even if only because the individual passes

through the various parts of it in one life-span. The individual is an entity even if the educational system is broken into parts. If the parts are related to one another in a disorderly way, the effectiveness of the process - from the point of view of the individual - is considerably reduced. Thus, some measure of planning is necessary in the interests of the individual pupil.

The first thing to recognise is that we cannot talk about this process as if it were a quantitative process. This may seem to take us into an argument about whether educational planning should be quantitative or qualitative. I have always thought it to be a silly debate. If you are trying to promote certain strategic changes in the educational system, you can't think about that unless you are prepared to think about the qualitative basis of the future educational system. You certainly have to think about the numbers too, but it is not possible to conceive of major future changes except in terms of qualitative planning.

Nobody seems to have got very far with this particular branch of educational planning. It is going to be one of the main challenges for educational planning in coming years to see whether ways of formulating 'alternative educational futures' related to future society can be developed. Only in this way could one have a realistic view about new curricula and structures and the new relationships between the individual and the school and between the school and the society.

If some progress could be made in this direction, specific policy changes could then be examined in terms of all the long-term implications - in terms of costs, impact on other parts of the educational system, etc. This is where the use of global models for educational systems may come in. I do not see global models of educational systems as being a precise tool enabling the detailed ramifications of decisions to be explored, but I do see it as the means of exploring in a rough way the implications of major changes that planners foresee in educational systems. After all, this is one of the major dramas of education in many countries. Policies to change particular parts of the system now cause unmanageable problems in other parts of the system five or ten years later. One striking example is the decision to move towards a comprehensive school system in Europe which has had obvious and foreseeable repercussions on the universities. Once you have decided to expand secondary education in this way, it is inevitable that the demand for higher education will grow with all the consequences for costs, admissions, new universities and so on. What I am suggesting is that if one did have a rough global model of the educational system, it would be possible to have a rough idea in advance, of the long-range effects of major decisions. This makes much more sense than to promote global models as if they could become a precise planning tool.

A second implication of the attempt to plan educational change is that it leads to new approaches to the planning process. In the O.E.C.D. countries in the last ten years educational planning has developed rather on the model of economic planning: we have educational planners with the technical function in Ministries of Education for preparing educational plans which are then to be 'implemented'.

We may however take another view. Whatever the process of quantitative planning, in the end it leads to decisions about major changes in the educational system. The discussion of such major decisions, with all their social implications should be a social and not a technocratic affair. In other words, it should be a process whereby the community (educational and political) arrives at the decisions it takes about the major changes in the educational system. Going further, one could echo Mr. Nehru's words about economic planning in India, to the effect that 'planning should take place in every village'. In other words, if we are serious when we talk of planning the educational revolution, the planners have to recognise that they have to face the educational community and the community at large in the planning process. This would imply different planning structures and machinery than those for developing an educational plan as a purely technocratic process.

For example, in Ireland, they have found that, in order to translate proposals about educational investment and development into reality it is necessary to involve the local communities. The development plan for each community is discussed at public meetings. This, of course, makes planning a much more difficult affair: it means taking seriously the conviction that it is one thing to have a plan and it is another thing to implement it!

To pursue the line of reasoning, planning the educational revolution would lead one to recognise that, in addition to promoting specific changes, policy should remove the general disincentives in the educational system to change. Many of you will be aware of the debate that has gone on for fifty years about innovation in agriculture. After fifty years of politics and research we recognise that individuals cannot alone carry the responsibility for introducing change and bear the costs. Farmers are no longer simply beseeched to accept change; there are many different policies whereby society shares the cost. The same is true in industry where collective bargaining and official action protect the worker from the consequences of technological change. In the educational field however we still behave as if all educational changes are good things necessarily, and that everything would be fine if only the teachers would stop resisting them. This is not a reasonable view to take. Teachers and the educational system are probably faced with far more potential changes than anyone could reasonably assimilate. A progressive head-master trying to run a modern school is faced by a bewildering series of changes in the mathematics, physics, language teaching, programmed

learning, team teaching, school management methods - added to which he is supposed to relate the school in a more effective way to the community outside. There is no shortage of potential innovations, but there is a shortage of capacity to assimilate and adjust. It is unreasonable to expect individual teachers, parents and children to carry all the burden. Why should teachers who are displaced by new teaching ideas be treated differently from workers displaced by new industrial technologies? Why are not incentives provided for change in education, in the same way as there are incentives for modernisation in industry and agriculture? One could think of many ways in which a policy for change would imply measures which would make it more reasonable for individuals and institutions to accept a high rate of educational change. Another example is the examination system: if the system which measures good performance is based on outdated content, it will of course act as a bulwark against change. There are thus many ways in which disincentives could be removed.

Still pursuing the same line of argument, namely that change can be planned, we are bound to ask whether a policy for research and development could act as a possible stimulus to innovation. Indeed, the planning groups in many countries are now responsible for promoting educational research, and this seems to be a perfectly reasonable development. If an educational plan formulates future educational requirements and proposes policies for meeting them, it is an obvious next step to reach the conclusion that a more effective educational plan could be formulated if research could throw light on certain relationships in the educational system. Class size is a good example. Firm knowledge about optimum class size would probably transform many planning exercises; it would change all the cost functions and teacher supply estimates. It is thus very reasonable for planners both to insist that research gets done in their own country and to use the results of research in other countries.

It would be a mistake however to assume, as in some countries at the present time, that research is the only or even predominant way to bring about educational change. Such a view depends on the assumption about the relationship between knowledge and action in the social field is the same as that in the natural sciences, i.e. that there is a research - development - innovation sequence. You have a problem, you do research, you do the development work and then apply the results. At least we know that in the educational field many past changes have been the consequence of relatively simple fundamental ideas about the pedagogical process. Philosophical ideas have directly influenced educational action. What frequently happens is that a rather simple but timely idea suddenly gets taken up and applied in many places. There may thus be a great role for fundamental research in education because action changes in education come frequently from restating questions, rather than finding neat answers in the form of so-called 'technologies'.

It does not follow of course that all change takes place in this way. New ideas may change the approach to education, but they cannot produce effective teaching/learning systems with texts, materials, teaching procedures and equipment. This is the function of development work, which is becoming increasingly important as it is recognised that general, legal reforms of education fail because of lack of 'know how' relevant to their implementation.

In some countries there is now recognition that, if there is to be an effective development process, it has to be separately organised and financed. In other words, some sort of a separate investment budget is needed so as to give experimental and development work a real chance of support. Development expenditures should be closely related to the bottle-necks in the long-term educational plan. They should be used to promote experimental schools, innovations and new technologies of teaching through a process separate from the normal administration of the school system.

All that has been said leads to the conclusion that planned innovation, and the creation of conditions conducive to change, is a necessary concern of educational planners. But they would do well to ponder on the fact that most educational change arises spontaneously and in a way that cannot be foreseen. One of the great problems of educational planning today is that quantitative planning has to be followed by qualitative planning and thus takes the planner into the arena of educational values and philosophy. If planning is to avoid the situation in which it takes on the air of a technocratic meddler with the creative processes of the classroom, it will be necessary to spread development work throughout the system and decentralise initiative and control.